

## Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 EUR-12 SAJ-01 NIC-01 OMB-01 AID-05 /085 W

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R 280305Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1429

INFO AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 15877

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, VS

SUBJECT: HOA HAO ATTEMPTS TO BUILD SELF-DEFENSE FORCE

REF: SAIGON TEL. NOS. 7745, 8784, 8835, 9117 AND 10075

1. HOA HAO RELIGIOUS FACTION LEADER LUONG TRONG TUONG APPEARS TO BE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF GVN PREOCCUPATION WITH HEIGHTENED COMMUNIST MILITARY ATTACKS IN MR-4 TO PRESS DEMANDS FOR GREATER HOA HAO AUTONOMY IN THE MILITARY SPHERE. CONTINUING LAST APRIL'S ATTEMPTS TO PRESSURE THE GVN IN THIS REGARD, TUONG FACTION REPS MET SEPTEMBER 24 WITH INTERIOR MINISTER LE CONG CHAT AND ASSISTANT DEFENSE MINISTER TON THAT CHUOC. THEY ASKED THAT 50,000 HOA HAO YOUTHS BE ARMED TO FIGHT THE COMMUNISTS; THAT 20,000 ADDITIONAL HOA HAO YOUTHS IN REAR AREAS ALSO BE ARMED; AND THAT 15,000 HOA HAO RELIGIOUS BE "MOBILIZED IN PLACE" (I.E., BE GRANTED DRAFT DEFERMENTS).

2. MORE RECENTLY ABOUT 3,000 TUONG FACTION HOA HAO, CARRYING  
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BAMBOO STICKS, MARCHED TO NUI SAM IN CHAU DOC AND CAMPED OVER-

NIGHT. THIS SHOW OF HOA HAO STRENGTH OCCURRED AT A TIME OF INCREASING HOA HAO NON-COOPERATION WITH GVN AUTHORITIES. NATIONAL POLICE CHIEF BG NGUYEN KHAC BINH TOLD US THAT THERE HAVE BEEN AS MANY AS 30 INCIDENTS IN WHICH HOA HAO SELF-DEFENSE FORCE (BAO AN) MEMBERS HAVE INTERFERED WITH NATIONAL POLICE EFFORTS TO ARREST DRAFT DODGERS. CHAU DOC PROVINCE CHIEF NGUYEN VAN CUA, IN APPARENT RESPONSE TO THIS PRESSURE, HAS EASED UP ON HIS PREVIOUSLY TOUGH POLICY OF APPREHENDING HOA HAO DRAFT DODGERS. BG BINH TOLD US THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT ANXIOUS FOR A CONFRONTATION WITH THE HOA HAO AT THIS TIME, AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO GVN PREOCCUPATION IN MR-4 WITH THE MILITARY SITUATION.

3. COMMENT: CURRENT HOA HAO RESTLESSNESS MUST BE SEEN IN LIGHT OF LONG STANDING DESIRE TO WREST FROM THE GVN SOME OF THE AUTONOMY THE HOA HAO ENJOYED DURING THE PRE-DIEM DAYS. MORE SPECIFICALLY THE HOA HAO, PRIMARILY THOSE FOLLOWING TUONG AND SELF-DEFENSE FORCE LEADER HAI TAP, WOULD LIKE GREATLY TO ENLARGE THE SELF-DEFENSE FORCE AND HAVE IT OPERATE UNDER THE CONTROL OF HOA HAO AUTHORITIES. THE GVN, WHICH IN EFFECT COMPROMISED WITH THE HOA HAO ON THIS ISSURE LAST APRIL BY NOT ENFORCING ITS INITIAL DEMAND THAT THE SELF-DEFENSE FORCE TURN IN ALL ITS ARMS, IS IN AN EVEN WEAKER POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE HOA HAO AT THE MOMENT. ALTHOUGH THE HOA HAO ARE DELTA PHENOMENON, THEIR DEMANDS TAKE ON NATION-WIDE SIGNIFICANCE IN LIGHT OF NECESSITY FOR AREAS WITH SURPLUS MANPOWER TO EXPORT SOLDIERS TO DEFEND AREAS LESS WELL ENDOWED. ONE OF THE COMPLAINTS OF THE HOA HAO IS IN FACT THAT PRIMARILY HOA HAO UNITS HAVE BEEN MOVED FROM HOA HAO PROVINCES LIKE AN GIANG AND CHAU DOC TO LESS SECURE PLACES AND HAVE SOMETIMES INCURRED HEAVY LOSSES THERE. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE GVN WILL BE FORCED TO APPEASE TUONG AND HIS FOLLOWERS UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT IS IN A BETTER POSITION TO DEAL WITH THE MATTER. THE HOA HAO IN GENERAL REMAIN STAUNCHLY ANTI-COMMUNIST AND CONTINUE TO DEFEND THEIR OWN AREAS WITH ALMOST COMPLETE SUCCESS.

MARTIN

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## Message Attributes

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